# NINE DECADES OF INDO-RUSS ORTHODOX RELATIONS: SOMETHING AGAINST THE PARABLES

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*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,*
*Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment seat;*
*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,*
*When two strong men stand face to face,*
*though they come from the ends of the earth!*

When Rudyard Kipling wrote these lines in his poem "The Ballad of East and West" in 1889, he never envisaged about the relations between Malankara and Russian Orthodox Churches. If so, he never would have pen down those lines. It was really a wonder how both the Churches came in to such a warm relation in an era when Ecumenism was unheard and communication and transportation was stringent.

It is really a wonder that the Malankara Orthodox Church belongs to the Oriental Orthodox family with Apostolic origin from St. Thomas, in the south - west corner of Indian peninsula, had in cordial relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church, a Byzantine Orthodox Church of extreme Northern hemisphere for the last ninety years. That too begins without a common platform of language to communicate.

It all begins with the visit of Archimandrite Andronic Elpidinsky; A Russian in exile to India on his own initiative, took the risk with a dream of ... *The entire Orthodox Church would find a new sister in the face of the Orthodox community in southern India* ...[1] He was first learned about the Orthodox Church in India during his Seminary days the text book of Smirnov on the Church history.[2]

In October 1931, he met His Holiness Catholicos Mar Baselius Geevarghese II at Old Seminary, Kottayam, India. The Catholicos knew about the Armenians, who are also the part of the Oriental Orthodox community but never heard about the Russians. Yet, as a priest in black robe, Archimandrite Andronic was admitted into the sanctuary during the Sunday liturgy.

At the end of the divine service, Archimandrite Andronic, then Hieromonk Andronic was asked to say a sermon. In his address, he expressed the hope that the Syrian Christians would continue to preserve the apostolic faith under the rule of their Catholicos. ... *The Syrian Christians that their Church, as an apostolic church and as a separate country and nation, should also be independent...:*[3] he told. As a Church fighting for retains its sovereignty for centuries,[4] those words were touching.

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1 Archimandrite Andronic (Elpidinsky), *Eighteen years in India*, Buenos Aires, 1959

2 Smirnov P, Istoriya, *Hristianskoj Provoslavnoj Cerkvi*, (The history of Christian Orthodox Church), Petrograd, 1915

3 *Eighteen years in India, op. cit*

4 In 1665, the Malankara Nazranis established relations with the West Syriac Church of Antioch to get proper consecration since there was none to do so after the Oath of Coonan Cross. For a century, things went well. But afterwards the West Syrians tried to take over the administration of the Malankara Church by claiming the supremacy of the Patriarch of

Afterwards, Hieromonk Andronic was extensively quizzed with questions especially by the main teachers of the Seminary, Fr. Malpan Mattakkal Alexandrayos Kathanar and Fr. Malpan Cheriyamdatthil Scaria Kathanar. According to Hieromonk Andronic, their main questions were:

1. First of all ...they asked me with great attention and distrust: whether the Russian Church was not subordinated to the Roman Pope.
2. [Then] they began to ask about the veneration of the Mother of God, the saints, prayer for the departed and the number of sacraments...
3. [Then they asked] ....how do we take communion - only by the Body of Christ and together is it communion with the Body and Blood or separately?

In his ... *bad English language with gestures,* Hieromonk Andronic answered them satisfactorily. According to him ...*Each of my answers gave them new satisfaction and more and more created a sense of our unity. Their answers to my questions also increasingly created in me a belief in our unity...* Finally His Holiness told him; *my home is your home, and you can always be here.*[5] It was the beginning of the Indo-Russian Orthodox relations.

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Antioch over Malankara. Since then, the Malankara Nazranis are successfully fighting for retaining its independence.

[5] *Eighteen years in India, op. cit*

The three questions the seminarians asked were crucial for the Malankara Church. First of all, they are still keeping the bitter memories about the coercive synod of Diamper of 1599[6] and the betrayal of Fr. Parambil Chandy in 1663 that divided the Malankara Church[7]. Beyond that, the recent treachery and looting of metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Ivanios of Bethany monastery in 1930[8] was far from healing.

The Anglican missionaries who were entered into the seminary as mission of help in 1818 to provide modern education was later turned as the preachers of the Protestantism among the Nazranis. They negated veneration of the Mother of God, the saints, prayer for the departed and tried to take the control of the temporal administration of the Church. Even though they were expelled in 1836, the ideology of Protestantism that they imported spread its wave among the Nazranis that led to another idler in 1889.[9]

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6 In 1599, with the help of the Portuguese colonial power, Alexis de Manazis, then Portuguese Governor and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Goa, forcefully summoned a synod of the Malankara Nazranis at Udayamperoor. Through this infamous synod, known as *the synod of Diamper*, he forcefully subordinated the Malankara Nazranis to the Pope of Rome. But in 1653, the Nazranis decleared independence from the Roman Catholic Church through the *Oath of Coonan-Cross*.

7 Fr. Parambil Chandy, one of the four advisers appointed to Mar Thoma I, the great, the first primate of the Nazranis after the Oath of Coonan Cross, joined with the Roman Catholics to become a bishop. A faction of Nazranis joined with him and thus a split was occurred among them.

8 Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Ivanios of Bethany monastery joined the Roman Catholic Church with a few people and with the huge amount of properties to the Roman Catholic Church in 1930. His sheep-stealing campaigns were at its peak during the visit of Hieromonk Andronic in 1931. Later, in 1932, Mar Ivanios was appointed by the Pope of Rome as Archbishop of the newly formed Syro-Malankara Archdiocese of Thiruvananthapuram.

9 A faction was formed among the Nazranis after the expulsion of the British Missionaries in 1836 favoring the Protestantism. They tried to control the Malankara Church but failed in

The Anglicans and the Protestant drop-outs from the Malankara Church were always trying to reduce the significance of the holy sacraments. They also advocated for distributing bread and wine separately in holy Eucharist against the Orthodox practice.[10]

In such a situation, those questions were essential for the seminarians to confirm the faith of Hieromonk Andronic of the Russian Orthodox Church, which was but sparingly known in India. The satisfactory answers of him paved the way for his warm entry to the Nazrani community.

Hieromonk Andronic was first assigned to Bethany monastery. He was permitted to perform his divine liturgy at the monastery chapel and altar. Later he was associated with monastery of Holy Transfiguration at Pathanapuram, Kollam District, India. There he was provided an isolated farm at his request. He was even provided with a deacon[11] by the monastery to assist in his liturgical service at chapel he built at the farm at Maduramala, Pattazhi near Pathanapuram. He stayed there for more than seventeen years.

Hieromonk Andronic was frequently invited for sermons and meditations to the parishes and conventions. He was treated by neighbouring people as *a man of God*. Even today, his framed photographs are decorating the walls of the old families of that

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the litigation. In 1889, they left the Church by forming a new Protestant Church named *The Malankara Marthoma Church*.

10 Those days, heated arguments were exchanged between the Malankara Church and the Marthoma Church through periodicals.

11 Later Remban (Hieromonk) Fr. Dr. N. J. Thomas.

terrain.[12] In between, Hieromonk Andronic was elevated as *Archimandrite* by Metropolitan Dositej[13] of Serbian Orthodox Church - later canonized as *Hiero-confessor Dositej of Zagreb and Vavedenje*[14] - on 24 January 1937 at Old Seminary[15], Kottayam, India, by order of Metropolitan Eulogius[16] from Paris and with the consent of Patriarch Vernava of Serbia.

After the primary discussion with the Nazranis in 1931, Hieromonk Andronic wrote to Metropolitan Eulogius[17] in Paris about the measures for Church unity. According to him ...*but it was a time of church troubles, and Metropolitan Eulogius written to the Patriarch of Constantinople, but received no answer...*[18]

In 1935, as the result of the reports of Archimandrite Andronic about the possible Indian-Russ Church unity, the Serbian Patriarch Barnabas convened a meeting of representatives of Russian churches abroad. *En-route* to it, Bishop Dimitri of

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12 This information provided by Dr. Paul Manalil from that vicinity with the copy of one of them.

13 For the details of the visit of Metropolitan Dositej to India see: Dr. Meledath Kurian Thomas, *Eventual Annals of Nazranis*, Kottayam, MOC Publications, 2016.

14 A.) http://orthodoxwiki.org/Dositheus_(Vasich)_of_Zagreb. B.) orthodoxhr.blogspot.com/.../sv-dositej-zagrebacki.htm, accessed 15 December, 2018.

15 Then residence of the Catholicos of the East.

16 Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii) (1868 – 1946) of Paris and Western Europe. During the tumultuous 1930s, he moved between ROCOR and the Ecumenical Patriarch, becoming the first Archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Exarchate of Western Europe. Following the Second World War, he returned to the Moscow Patriarchate. METROPOLITAN EULOGIUS (Basil S. Georgievsky, b. 1868 in Somovo, d. 1946 in Paris) as cited in: *http://www.rocorstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Roca-Part-VI-Biographies_final1.pdf.*

18 *Eighteen years in India, op. cit*

Khailar from Manchuria[19] visited Malankara in 1936. His meeting with the Syrian Christian bishops is described by Archimandrite Andronic as follows:

> There was no contradiction in the creed on the question of the heresies, especially on monophysitism, interfering with unity. More difficult was the question of the Ecumenical Councils. The Christians of South India recognize only the first three Ecumenical Councils, to the fourth, the Council of Chalcedon; they have a definite hostile attitude. The question was put this way: if there is no difference in creeds, the question of the Councils is no longer so important to the Bishops of the Syrian Church. They said that they simply did not know the other Ecumenical Councils, except the first three. Therefore, it was decided that they would receive a book about all seven Ecumenical Councils. And some time later, the book was actually received and transferred to the bishops. But, in essence, this question, although necessary, is a subordinate. And most importantly: our common consciousness of belonging to Orthodoxy, to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We had this consciousness before, and any healthy communication, friendly discussion of the case.

Again, Archbishop Nestor[20], with his secretary, Archimandrite Nathanael (Lvov)[21] visited India with an intention to unite the

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[19] BISHOP DEMETRIUS (Nicholas F. Voznesensky, b. 187 1, d. 1947 in Leningrad) 1934 Bishop of Khailar. as cited in: http://www.rocorstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Roca-Part-VI-Biographies_final1.pdf, accessed 15 December 2018.

Malankara Church with the Byzantine Church. The conversations between Archbishop Nestor and the bishops of the Malankara Church summarised by Archimandrite Andronic as follows:

> The difference was also in the attitude of the Syrian Christians to the negotiations on faith. While in negotiations with Bishop Dimitry everything was new, creative work was going on, now the pattern was visible. To the questions of Archbishop Nestor, Bishop Philoxenos[22] clearly and calmly gave previously resolved and formulated answers; the uselessness of repeated conversations was felt.[23]

An immediate unity was out of question, the relations went on in a smooth pace. In 1934 Catholicos Baelius Geevarghese II visited Jerusalem where he was lodged at a guesthouse attached with the Russian nunnery. On 24 September 1934[24] he met Archbishop Anastasii[25] of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia at the nunnery. Later in the same evening, Catholicos

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[20] Archbishop Nestorius (Nicholas Anisimov, b. 1884 in Vyatka, d. 1962 in Moscow) 1916 Bishop of Kamchatka & Petropavlovsk. as cited in: *http://www.rocorstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Roca-Part-VI Biographies_final1.pdf,* accessed 15 December 2018.

[21] https://www.rocor.org.uk/abp_nathaniel.html, accessed 15 December 2018.

[22] For more details about Mar Philaxinos, see: *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geevarghese_Mar_Philoxenos* accessed 15 December 2018.

[23] *Eighteen years in India, op. cit*

[24] Rassophore Monk Angelos, *Perpetual Embers: A History of ROCOR in India,* Paper presented in 2018 at Holy Trinity Seminary, New York

[25] Metropolitan Anastasii (Gribanovskii) (1873 – 1965) of Kishinev. He was the administrator of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem and later the second First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

went to the Russian church and attended the evening prayers and said a small sermon.[26] According to Rassophore Monk Angelos, *Catholicos Geevarghese was received with patriarchal honours and traditional Russian hospitality, which was reciprocated in later years when Russian and Serbian bishops made visits to India...*

Again, *en route* to Edinburgh conference in 1937, Catholicos Geevarghese II stayed with Metropolitan Eulogius at Paris from July 21 to 26, 1937. They had a conversation about Christology. It is recorded as:

> ...the other Orthodox Churches tagged the Syrians as *Monophysite Jacobite* and set aside as heretics. The Catholicos described the doctrine of the Malankara Church regarding the one nature of Jesus Christ. By hearing that, the elderly Metropolitan Eulogius jumped cheerfully from his seat and kissed [the Catholicos] by saying *what you say is our faith. So we are one.* He also changed his earlier decision not to participate in the Edinburgh conference. The discussions continued there too...[27]

Even at this friendly atmosphere, the road to full communion reaches nowhere. Rassophore Monk Angelos evaluates the situation as follows:

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26 Dr. M. Kurian Thomas, *Kurichi Bavayude Moonnu Paradesha Yaathrakal,* (The three Foreign travels of Kurichi Bava – *In Malayalam*), Kottayam, MOC Publications, 2015, pp 213, 215, 217

27 *Kurichi Bavayude..., Op.Cit., p 53*

The question of the Synod of Chalcedon also raised its head again. Archbishop Nestor wrote to the Synod from Kerala that the Indians had strong veneration for Dioscoros, Severos, and other monophysite leaders and that it would be very dangerous and difficult to combat it. Prior to the meeting between the Russian and Indian hierarchs, Metropolitan Anastasii had sent copies of the dogmatic decrees and definitions of the Seven Ecumenical Synods to the Catholicos, but there seems to have been no change in the position of the Indians, that they felt the first three to be sufficient and would recognise the other four only if they did not interfere with the first three.[28]

Catholicos Geevarghese II and Abo Alaxios met Metropolitan Anastasii, then prelate of the Russian Orthodox Church in exile, again on 30 September 1937 at Belgrade. He was there to see off the Catholicos after his Serbian tour. *En route,* the Catholicos and Abo Alaxios resided at Rome as the guest of Archimandrite Simon at the parsonage of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1 to 6 October 1937.[29]

While those theological negotiations went on, there were personal connections made between Malankara and Russian churches. Madam *Vera Vasilievna Bartenev,* daughter of the famous

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[28] *Perpetual Embers…, Op. Cit.,* p 33

[29] *Kurichi Bavayude… Op. Cit.* …………

missionary Vasily Mikhailovich Skvortsov,[30] was with the Malankara Church on invitation to organize the newly formed women's league named *Martha Mariyam Samajam* around 1938. She was warmly welcomed and worked hard but she had to leave India due to ill health in 1939 retaining good memories among her colleagues.[31] According to Fr. Andronic, her work was:

> ...The field of activity was wide and the work went well at first. In the centre began to organize courses. At the same time, Vera Vasilievna was invited to various large and small meetings. She was like a queen among bees...[32]

The outbreak of World War II, the independence of India, political turmoil in the East Europe etc. was made relations to a stand still for more than a decade. The changing alliance by the bishops of ROCOR, to whom the Malankara Church dealing with, during the post World War II also made relations impossible. In a way, Fr. Andronic remained as the only link in between. Metropolitan Abo Alaxios Mar Theodosius OIC[33] and Fr. K. Philipose[34] were his counterparts from the Indian side. Father Lazar (Edgar) Moore, an Anglican turned Orthodox becomes the successor of Fr. Andronic.[35]

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30 http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_s/skvorcov_vm.html, accessed 15 December 2018.

31 *The Orthodox Sabha Magazine*, Thulam 1115. She left India from Bombay on 30 September 1939 by ship due to her ill health in tropical climate.

32 *Eighteen years in India, op. cit*

33 http://dioceseofniranam.org/945/1047/metropolitans-from-the-diocese/late-metropolitans/alexios-mar-theodosius, accessed 15 December 2018.

34 Later Dr. Philoose Mar Theophilose of Ankamaly and Bombay. See: http://mgocsmdiaspora.org/blog/remembering-late-lamented-dr-philipose-mar-theophilus/ accessed 15 December 2018.

35 *Perpetual Embers..., Op. Cit.*, p 25

Fr. Andronic left India in 1949 to the USA. Even after, he maintained good relations with the Malankara Church. He presented price of three set of chalices to Mar Theodosius for the use of the new parishes in the Outside Kerala diocese. They were given to the Pune, Delhi and Jabalpur parishes.[36] Fr. Andronic had regular correspondence with Mar Theodosius and Fr. Philipose. He made arrangements for Fr. Philipose[37] of the missionary organisation *Servants of Cross* to study free of cost at St. Tikhon's Seminary in 1957.[38] Fr. Andronic died at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, Pennsylvania on 30 March 1959.

As the result of these efforts, the Malankara Church constituted a theological commission and prepared a document about the Christological stance of the Church dated 21 November 1953 to ROCOR at New York.[39]

In 1954, Nikolai Mikhailovich Zernov,[40] the Russian Orthodox academician, was invited as principal of Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta, the newly established secular institution of the Malankara Church. He served there for one year while he was simultaneously taking classes at the Old Seminary, Kottayam for the deacons.

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36 *The History and Report of the Orthodox Parishes Outside Malabar*, 15 February 1955, Madras, The Indian Orthodox Church Mission.

37 Later he was elevated as Corepiscopus and served as the secretary of the *Servants of Cross* till his demise.

38 *Eighteen years in India, op. cit*

39 *Perpetual Embers...*, *Op. Cit.*, Appendix

40 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_Zernov accessed 15 December 2018.

Rassophore Monk Angelos describes one interaction during this period.

> In 1954, just before Great Lent, Father Lazarus attended another theological commission, this time including twelve Indian metropolitans and Russian theologian Dr. Nikolai Zernov, who had been principal of the Catholicate College, a secular institution run by the Indian church, for over a year. This commission had been formed at the initiative of Zernov while he was in India.[41]

By the end of the 1940's, the Indian Church began thinking of establishing relations with the Russian Church in the Motherland Russia that was impossible previously due to the political reasons. In 1948, Mar Theodosius and Fr. Philipose wrote to Fr. Andronic about their intention to visit Moscow after the Amsterdam conference.[42] By the next one decade, the Malankara Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church developed a warm mutual relation.

In 1960, Patriarch Alexy I of Moscow and all Russians extended an invitation to the Catholicos of the East to visit Russia in 1960 with the permission of the Soviet Government and Government of India.[43] This was repeated by the Russian delegation in person in

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41 *Perpetual Embers..., Op. Cit.,*

42 *Eighteen years in India, op. cit*

43 Letter dated 24 October 1960 from ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

December 1961.[44] But the Catholicos could not make it due to his old age.[45] But upon the request of the delegation, he appointed a two member theological commission consist of Fr. K. Philipose and Fr Paul Varghese[46] for further dialogue.[47]

In December 1961, a large delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church visited the Malankara Orthodox Church including Archbishop Sergius of Leningrad, Bishop Antony Bloom from London[48], Prof. Fr. Vladimir from Leningrad Theological Seminary, Fr. Flornsky, the noted Russian theologian from Harvard University along with Metropolitan Nikodim.[49] They were greeted with an overwhelming welcome all over Malankara.[50]

On their audience to the Catholicos, Metropolitan Nikodim expressed the desire of Patriarch Alexy I about the further strengthening of the bilateral relations. As the response, Catholicos Geevarghese II made the following statement:

> We have a great desire to the unity of both of our Churches. We are the children of St. Thomas the Apostle. We are here from the apostolic period. Even though there were several difficulties and pressures, we stood here affirm always with the faith that handed over by St. Thomas the apostle. It is faith that announced by

44 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine*, January 1962

45 He was 87 then

46 Later Metropolitan Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorius

47 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine*, January 1962

48 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_of_Sourozh

49 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikodim_(Rotov)

50 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine*, January 1962

touching the body of our lord as *My Lord and My God.* We took the visit of you who are the children of St. Paul the apostle to the Church of St. Thomas. Convey the greetings and thanks of mine and of this Church to Patriarch Alexy.[51]

From then onwards, the Indo-Russ Orthodox relations moved on a fast pace. I am not in a position to scribble down all of the mutual interactions afterwards since its dimension is too weighty. Hitherto, I am trying to log some momentous events among them.

In May 1963, Archbishop Cyprian visited Malankara.[52] In the same year, Metropolitans Mathews Mar Athanasius[53] and Daniel Mar Philexenos visited Russia to pay the greetings of the Indian Church during the Episcopal Golden Jubilee celebrations of Patriarch Alexy I.[54]

In 1965 Metropolitan Alexy of Estonia and Fr. Alexots represented the Russian Orthodox Church in the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Old Seminary, Kottayam.[55] Metropolitan Alexy, who was later become Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russians addressed the Malankara Syrian

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51 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine*, January 1962

52 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine*, May 1963

53 Late Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Matews I

54 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine*, June 1963

55 Malayala Manorama, 31 December 1965

Christian Association held at M. D. Seminary, Kottayam on 28 December 1965 also. [56]

In 1967, a delegation consists of Metropolitans Yoohanon Mar Sevarius, Thomas Mar Themothios[57], Fr. M. V. George,[58] Fr. P. A. Samuel and Mr. Jacob Stephen visited Russia as the guests of Patriarch Alexy I. This visit was a result of Patriarch Alexy's suggestion to send a high power delegation since Catholicos Augen I, the successor of Geevarghese II, too could not visit Russia due to his old age and illness. Their visit was arranged as in connection with the Golden Jubilee of Moscow Patriarchate.[59] Mar Themothios published a beautiful travelogue about this tour in about 25 parts in Churches official publication - The *Malankara Sabha Magazine.*

In April 1969, Archbishop Anthony of Minsk along with Fr. Seraphion and Fr. George Telpiyes visited Malankra and extended the warm greetings of Patriarch Alexy I.[60] Metropolitan Philipose Mar Theophilos of Ankamaly, former Fr. K. Philipose, visited Russia in 1969.[61]He attended as special invitee to the Holy Synod started on 30 May 1971 that elected Patriarch Pimen I. He also participated in the enthroning held on 3 June 1971 as the

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56 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine,* January 1966

57 Later Catholicos Baselius Marthomas Didymos I

58 Later Metropolitan Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios

59 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarch_of_Moscow_and_all_Rus%27, accessed 15 December 2018.

60 *Malankara Sabaha Magazine,* January 1969

61 Malayala Manorama, 29 June 1969

representative of the Malankara Orthodox Church.[62] According to some sources; ...*he was the only one special invitee to attend the selection of His Holiness Peeman Patriarch of Russian Orthodox Church...*[63] Earlier he visited Russia in 1969.[64] Again in July 1976, he visited Russia again along with Metropolitan Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.[65]

It is worth to note the visit of Metropolitan Abraham Mar Climees to Russia in 1968[66] and visit of Metropolitan Filarent of Kiev to India in 1974.[67] Not ignoring the later visit in 2008 by Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad who is the present Patriarch of Moscow and all Russians.

Patriarch Pimen I repeatedly invited the Catholicos of the East to visit Russia. As the result, Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews I, accompanied by Metropolitans Mathews Mar Coorilos, Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorius and Joseph Mar Pachomios along with Priest and lay representatives visited Russia. On 21 September 1976 he was received royally at Moscow Sheremetyevo airport by Patriarch Pimen I himself. This five day tour was

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[62] Malankara Sabha Magazine, 1971 May & June

[63]http://mgocsmdiaspora.org/blog/remembering-late-lamented-dr-philipose-mar-theophilus/

[64] *Malayala Manorama*, 29 June 1976

[65] *Malayala Manorama*, 18 July 1976

[66] *Malayala Manorama*, 16 June 1969

[67] *Malayala Manorama*, 2 December 1974

strengthened the mutual relations further.[68] The Catholicos invited Patriarch Pimen to India.

From 23 January to February 1977, Patriarch Pimen I of Moscow and all Russians visited India as the guest of Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews I. He was received with the traditional Keralite hospitality all over all the places he visited. On 25 January 1977, he inaugurated the northern block of the Old Seminary complex at Kottayam.

In 1988, a high level Indian delegation represented the Malankara Orthodox Church led by Metropolitan Philipose Mar Theophilos in the *Millennium of the baptism of Russ* celebrations. The Indian team includes Metropolitans Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorius, Philipose Mar Eusabius, Mathews Mar Epiphanios and Paulose Mar Milithios who is none other than the present Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Paulose II.[69] They were received joyously by Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev, the chief organizer of the event.

The blooming Indo-Russ relations paved the way to several Indian clergy to do their higher studies in Theology and sacred arts at the prestigious institutions in Russia. Most prominent among them are Metropolitan Abraham Mar Savarius, Metropolitan Dr. Mathews Mar Sevarius, Fr. Dr. K. L. Mathew Vaidyan, Principal, St. Pauls Mission Training Centre,

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[68] *Malankara Sabha Magazine*, 1976 October

[69] *Malayala Manorama*, 6 February 1988

Mavelikkara and Fr. Dr. M. P. George, Director, Sruthi School of Liturgical Music, Old Seminary, Kottayam.

We are proud to say that Malayalam, the mother-tongue of most of Orthodox Christians in India, is the language to which *Philokalia*[70] was fully translated for the first time from Russian. All four volumes are published together in 2008. It is worth to note the efforts of Mr. Cherian Eapan in that project.

While the second generation of the Indian Orthodox migrants to the western hemisphere required priestly training, they have started enrolling at St. Vladimir's Seminary, New York since 1999 and St. Tikhon's Seminary, New York since 2000. Now, all Diaspora students of the Malankara Orthodox Church depends these two seminaries for their basic theological training and graduating with Master of Divinity. Metropolitan Mathews Mar Bernabas of North America was a member of board of trustees of St. Vladimir's Seminary followed by Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos of South East America since 2011.

Before concluding, I wish to note a recent incident that shows the warmth of Indo-Russ Orthodox relations. Mr Valery Petrovich Solonin, a Russian technician, demised at Kudamkulam atomic power station, Tamil Nadu. He was buried at *Thomayar Kovil*, Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu, one of the very few churches with the St. Thomas tradition, by its vicar Fr. Remban Bersleebi on 21 December 2009.

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70 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philokalia

While unfolding the account of about 90 years of Indo-Russ Orthodox relations, we have to bow in front of a few individuals further than the Orthodox *Sebornost* of both the Malankara Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. First among them is indeed Archimandrite Andronic who pioneered himself to make an Indo-Russ unity. Then to Metropolitan Abo Alaxios Mar Theodosius and to Fr. K. Philipose *alias* Metropolitan Dr. Philipose Mar Theophilos of Ankamaly and Bombay. Beyond them, Catholicos Basalius Geevarghese II, who was affectionately referred to as *Patriarch Vassily Gregory* in Slavonic countries and Catholicos Basalius Marthoma Mathews I, the primates of the Malankara Orthodox Church who envisaged *Sebornost* beyond the borders of dogma. I deliberately skipped the most prominent among them, Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios, since his contributions are far beyond the scope of this paper.

I regret in one point while concluding this paper. That, according to Fr. Andronic and recently by Rassophore Monk Angelos: ...the *question of the Synod of Chalcedon also raised its head again...* in the dialogue amid the Indian and Russian Orthodox Church. However, in my knowledge, no serious theological discussion held on the basis of that book; *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined* by the Malanakra Orthodox scholar Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel,[71] published originally in 1977.[72] Even though I am ignorant in

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71 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V._C._Samuel
72 https://www.amazon.com/Council-Chalcedon-Re-Examined-V-Samuel/dp/1401016448

theology, I strongly feel that an evaluation of that thesis might be a real theological ice-breaker in between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches.